



Kissing Cousins or Not? Understanding Generations, Kith, Kin and Relationships

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Family history can have confusing terms and information. Following are definitions, explanation and information.

Definitions and Explanations

Kith and Kin

“Kith” is an archaic Scottish word meaning “friends and neighbors” but can also mean “distant kindred.”

www.kith.org/index.html and Webster’s Revised Unabridged Dictionary (1913)

“Kin” includes both the nuclear and extended family and generally includes all known ***relatives***.

Irish Kinship

Cían is an Irish word that means “long, enduring, far, distant” and traditionally referred to the agnatic, male descendants, of a common ancestor such as “the O’Donnells” and the “O’Niells.”

These groups were known as clans with traditional chiefdoms, subgroups, etc. The local kin group in this system was called a “fine.”

<http://www.everyculture.com/Europe/Irish-Kinship-Marriage-and-Family.html>

The ancient Irish family comprised four groups of relations:

- ***Gelfine*** – “the family of the hand,” descendants of a grandfather
- ***Derbfine*** – ***the certain or true family, descendants of a great-grandfather***
- ***Iarfine*** – “the distant family,” descendants of great-***grandfathers and associated lines***
- ***Indfine*** – “the final family,” descendants of great-***great-grandfathers***
Lisa M. Bitel, Land of Women: Tales of Sex and Gender from Early Ireland (*Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998*), 89, and *Henri Hubert*, The Greatness and Decline of the Celts (*Abingdon, England: Routledge, 1996*), n.p.

Scottish Kinship

"Blood kinship lay at the heart of clan society."

"Throughout Scotland, the implications of the term kindred or kinship went far further **than mere nomenclature. Kinship brought with it expectations of loyalty and unity based** on a sense of common purpose and identity. ... There was a strongly paternalistic **strain to their relations whereby the leader was meant to provide protection and maintenance, in return for the loyal service of his kinsmen. Mutual obligations existed** between them."

Anna Groundwater, Power, Kinship, Allegiance Great Britain: CPI Antony Rowe, 2010), 49.

Kinship Terms

Affines – relatives by marriage

Affines of Affines – kith-laws

Affinity – relationship by marriage ties

Bilateral Kinship – kinship traced to relatives through both father and mother

Clan – a descent group who typically do not know the genealogical links that connect them

Co-Cousins – wife's and husband's nepotes

Co-Laws – in-laws' spouses (collateral affines)

Collateral Kinsmen – the siblings of lineal relatives (parents, grandparents) and their descendants

Consanguines – blood kin

Lineal Consanguines – direct blood kin (ancestors and descendants)

Collateral Consanguines – blood kin through Siblings, cousins, etc.

Consanguinity – relationship by blood. The word is derived from the Latin consanguineous which means "of common blood."

Cross Cousins – the children of opposite-sexed siblings

Cross-Cousin Marriage – a marriage between father's sister's child and mother's brother's child

Elementary family – the same as a Nuclear Family which consists of groups/relatives of two or more nuclear families linked together through parent and child or through Siblings

Extended Family – a domestic group that consists of two or more nuclear families linked together through parent and child or through siblings

Family of Procreation – nuclear family established by marriage consisting of the person, spouse and children

Family of Orientation – nuclear family into which the person was born and reared

Genitor – a biological father

Genitrix – a biological mother

In-Laws – spouse's blood kin (direct affines)

Kin-Laws – wife's or husband's blood kin (secondary affines)

Kindred – a social group consisting of an individual's circle of relatives

Kith-Laws – closely connected but not actually related

Lineage – a unilineal descent group based on patrilineal or matrilineal descent

Nepotes – nieces and nephews

Nuclear Family – consists of a wife/mother, Husband/father, and their children

Parallel-Cousins – the children of same-sexed siblings

Phratry – a “grouping of clans related by traditions of common descent or historical alliance based on kinship.”

Sept – a non-unilineal descent group

Unilineal Descent – patrilineal (agnatic) or matrilineal (uterine) descent

Michael Dean Murphy, “A Kinship Glossary: Symbols, Terms, and Concepts,”

<http://anthropology.ua.edu/Faculty/murphy/436/kinship.htm>

George H. Amber, *Blood Kin and “In-Laws”* (West Bloomfield, Michigan: Succinic Press, 1993)

Descent Groups and Consanguinity

“Different descent principles and marriage rules result in the formation of different types of families and larger kin based groups. ... most people at some time in their lives are **members of more than one family group.**”

“The Nature of Kinship: Descent Groups,” http://anthro.palomar.edu/kinship/kinship_4.htm

Nuclear Family of Orientation –

Nuclear Family of Procreation –

Consanguinity -- *The word is* derived from the Latin consanguineous which means “of common blood.”

“Consanguineous kinship is a universal type; it includes those with common ancestors and excludes individuals who lack ancestors in common.”

“Consanguineous relatives are defined within **various degrees, according to the** likelihood of sharing genetic potentialities from common ancestors.”

“Consanguinity,” Encyclopædia Britannica, <http://www.britannica.com/topic/consanguinity>

Relationships

Defining Relationships

Father = Mother

Brother/Sister

Son/Daughter

Grandfather = Grandmother

Uncle/Aunt

First Cousin

First Cousin, once removed

Great-Grandfather = Great-Grandmother

Grand-Uncle/Grand-Aunt or Great-Uncle/Great-Aunt

Second Cousin

Common Ancestors and Pedigree Collapse

Six Degrees of Separation

The concept of six degrees of separation is “if a person is one step away from each **person they know and two steps away from each person who is known by one of the** people they know, then everyone is an average of six ‘steps’ away from each person on **Earth.**” *Robert Arp*, 1001 Ideas that Changed the Way We Think, 816.

It is estimated that everyone on earth is a 40th cousin.

“Anybody who had children more than a few hundred years ago is likely to have millions of descendants today.” *Matt Crenson*, “Brooke Shields comes from royalty; so do you,” (2006)

It is estimated that “the most recent common ancestor of every European today (except **for recent immigrants to the Continent) was someone who lived in Europe in the surprisingly recent past—only about 600 years ago.**” *Olson*, “The Royal We,” The Atlantic (2002)

“Every person on Earth’s most recent common ancestor might have died less than 2000 years ago.”

Wilkins, “Why humans are all much more related than you think,” io9, <http://io9.com/5791530/why-humans-all-much-more-related-than-you-think>.

Pedigree Collapse = A Small Gene Pool

Pedigree collapse is caused by marriages between cousins. This includes 3rd, 2nd, and even 1st cousins. This reduces the number of direct ancestors.

According to Joseph Chang’s mathematical model of our ancestors:

- ***Before 700 AD, every single human is either ancestor of no one alive today, or ancestor of everyone alive today.***
- ***Between 700 AD and 1200 AD, every single human is either of no one alive today, ancestor of everyone alive today. Or ancestor of some people alive today.***
- ***After 1200 AD, every single human is either ancestor of no one alive today, or ancestor of some people alive today.***

<http://humphrysfamilytree.com/ca.math.html>

“Confucius, Nefertiti, and just about any other historical figure who was even moderately prolific must today be counted among everyone’s ancestors.”

Olson, “The Royal We,” The Atlantic (2002)

Understanding Generations

Usually a generation is thought to be about twenty-five years between the birth of a parent to the birth of a child.

The length of a generation in earlier periods of history was probably closer to twenty rather than twenty-five, given people mated and died at a younger age.

As age of marriage has increased, generations could become longer, up to thirty years.

List of Generations:

<u>Era</u>	<u>Years</u>	<u>Generation</u>	<u>Europe Generation</u>
Age of Enlightenment	1701-1723	Awakening	
Great Awakening	1724-1741	Liberty	
French-Indian War	1742-1766	Republican	
American Revolution	1767-1791	Compromise	
Era of Good Feeling	1792-1821	Transcendental	(UK) Georgian & Regency
Second Great Awakening	1822-1842	Gilded	(UK) Regency
Civil War	1843-1859	Progressive	(UK) Victorian
Reconstruction	1860-1882	Missionary	(UK) Victorian
Missionary Awakening	1883-1900	Lost	Generation of 1914
World War I	1901-1924	G.I./Greatest Gen.	(UK) Interbellum
World War II	1925-1942	Silent/Lucky Few	
Superpower America	1943-1960	Baby Boom	(UK) Baby Boom
"Boom Awakening"	1961-1981	Generation X	(UK) Generation X
Information Revolution	1982-2000	Millennial/Gen. Y	
	2001-?	Generation Z/ iGeneration	

"Cycles in U.S. History: Remembering the Future," The Time Page, <http://www.timepage.org/time.html>

"Generations Nicknames and Groupings Theory," BusinessBalls.com,

<http://www.businessballs.com/generations-nicknames-theories.htm>

"Generation," Wikipedia, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Generation>

The people of the various generations are said to reflect the culture and values of that generation.

It is important to learn about and understand:

- *When the people lived*
- *What they experienced*
- *How events impacted their lives*
- *What values were passed on*
- *Characteristics of each generation*
- *Did the ancestors follow the generational pattern*

Further Reading

George H. Amber, *Blood Kin and "In-Laws"* (**West Bloomfield, Michigan: Succinic Press, 1993**)

Anna Groundwater, *Power, Kinship, Allegiance* (**Great Britain: CPI Anthony Rowe, 2010**).

Ian Keen, "Definitions of Kin," *Journal of Anthropological Research* **41:1 (Spring, 1985): 62-90**.

Stephen Lewis, "Counting Your Ancestors," *FamilyTree* (**March, 2013**): **18-22**.

"'Most recent Common Ancestor' Of All Living Humans Surprisingly Recent," *Science Daily* (**30 September 2004**),

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2004/09/040930122428.htm>.

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<http://anthropology.ua.edu/Faculty/murphy/436/kinship.htm>.

Adam Rutherford, "So you're related to Charlemagne? You and every other living European," *The Guardian* (**24 May 2015**),

<http://www.theguardian.com/science/commentisfree/2015/may/24/business-genetic-ancestry-charlemagne-adam-rutherford>.

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